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INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RHMFIS/CJTF HOA

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000666

DEPT FOR SE GRATION, S/USSES, AF A/S CARSON, AF/C
NSC FOR MGAVIN
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: ASEC PGOV PREL KPKO SOCI AU UNSC SU
SUBJECT: SLA/MM ALLEGES CHADIAN MILITARY ASSISTANCE IN JEM ATTACKS
AS MBEKI VISITS EL FASHER

REF: A) KHARTOUM 661
B) KHARTOUM 553
C) KHARTOUM 649

¶1. (SBU) Summary: No new fighting occurred on the Chad-Sudan border in North Darfur on May 19, but SLA/MM alleged that Chadian military officers assisted in the May 16 assault on Karnoi and previous attacks on SLA/MM positions in Sudanese territory. UNAMID has not been able to corroborate these allegations. Sudanese authorities claimed to have closed the border with Chad, and SLA/MM officials also expressed disappointment that the international community has yet to condemn JEM's recent acts of aggression. Thabo Mbeki and the AU Panel of Experts visited El Fasher and Zam Zam IDP camp on May 19, and an IDP leader who spoke with Sen. Kerry during his April 17 visit to El Fasher was arrested by NISS on May 17. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) UNAMID reported no new conflict today in western North Darfur, in the areas near the border with Chad, following the May 16 assault by the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and their capture of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) garrison of Karnoi, approximately 50 km from the Chadian border. Government-controlled press in Khartoum quoted senior SAF military officials who claimed that the SAF had closed the border with Chad in order to thwart any attacks by JEM, which they insist is supported by Chadian President Idris Deby.

¶3. (SBU) Sudanese Liberation Army/Minni Minnawi (SLA/MM) officers in El Fasher claimed that the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) signatory faction still held the key town of Umm Barru, but that JEM aggression had forced them to pull back from tiny desert villages that ring the main road linking the Chadian border and El Fasher. Ishaq Ahmed Abdulrahman, administrative manager of the Transitional Darfur Regional Authority in El Fasher, told polassst on May 19 that JEM had pushed SLA/MM back from villages such as Abu Leeha, Abu Gamra and Fureria, but after tactically concentrating their forces near Um Barro, SLA/MM managed to repulse a JEM attack aimed to force them from the area. Abdulrahman indicated that JEM had previously avoided larger SAF military installations in North Darfur. However, JEM was able to seize Karnoi on May 16 because it was vulnerable to capture. It was reportedly guarded by fewer than 100 SAF troops. Adam Ali War, communications officer of SLA/MM in El Fasher, said on May 19 JEM remains in control of Karnoi, but that Khalil Ibrahim's JEM forces are vulnerable to a GOS counterattack.

¶4. (SBU) Citing reports from the field near the Chadian border, Abdulrahman claimed that JEM had received support from Chadian military commanders in attacking SLA/MM and SAF positions. (Note: UNAMID has not been able to confirm these allegations. End note.) Both Abdulrahman and War remained convinced that JEM is using its relationship with Chad to force SLA/MM out of the desert area of Dar Zaghawa. War mentioned that he was surprised that the international community had not yet commented on JEM's recent aggression. "Maybe

they bless these actions," he complained. "Otherwise, I don't see any convincing reason they did not release any denunciation or condemnation."

¶15. (SBU) Former President of South Africa Thabo Mbeki visited El Fasher and Zam Zam IDP camp on May 19 along with the African Union Panel of Experts. This was their second trip to Darfur, and El Fasher town saw no security incidents during the visit. However, National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) in El Fasher arrested one of the main Umdas (community leaders) of Al Salam IDP camp on May 17. Adam Yahya Daw Al-Beit, who spoke first with Senator John Kerry in his April 17 visit to Al Salam (ref B), was arrested while traveling from the camp to El Fasher, and is still being held without charges. Umda Ahmed Atim Othman, another camp leader who spoke with Sen. Kerry on April 17, reported that NISS continues to accuse the umdas of disclosing camp news to international personnel.

¶16. (SBU) SLA/Abdul Wahid commander Suleiman Marjan remains in Kampala and plans to fly to Paris to persuade e Abdul Wahid to participate in peace talks with Sudanese authorities and other rebel movements. In a conversation with polasst, Marjan said that commanders in the movement are trying to push the Paris-based rebel leader to engage with the international community, but Abdul Wahid insisted that he refuses to participate in talks in Doha given the Qatari regime's association with JEM and Islamic movements in Somalia (Note: This tracks with similar claims made by SLA/AW General Commander Gaddura ref C. End note.) Marjan said he was awaiting s U.S. or international assistance to facilitate his travel from Uganda to France.

¶17. (SBU) Comment: JEM's advance into Darfur has slowed for this
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week, but it is likely that Khartoum will counterattack with increased SAF bombing in far western North Darfur likely in the near future. JEM's attacks will continue to threaten Darfuris as Khalil Ibrahim clearly aims to expand the zone of conflict from the empty desert of Dar Zaghawa to populated stretches closer to El Fasher. The allegation of Chadian military involvement in JEM attacks on SAF installations is serious, but remains unsubstantiated. It is a claim that could be investigated thoroughly once UNAMID brings its plans for a Mobile Monitoring Team to fruition. The latter, though, assumes that such a team would be allowed access to the areas by the warring factions. End comment.

ASQUINO